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Eritrean Resettlement in Indianapolis

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Preface:

A professor required groups of students to meet with refugees and immigrants from various places. Students were supposed to learn about interviewing and get exposed to the diversity of people in Indianapolis. I met with Mussie Zena, an Eritrean immigrant currently living in Indianapolis. After the interview, I talked with several friends about what I had just done. Almost none of them knew where Eritrea was, and certainly none of them knew that Eritrean immigrants were living in Indianapolis. A combination of this ignorance and the questions I had for Mussie drove me to do this project.

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~ In alphabetical order ~

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Introduction:

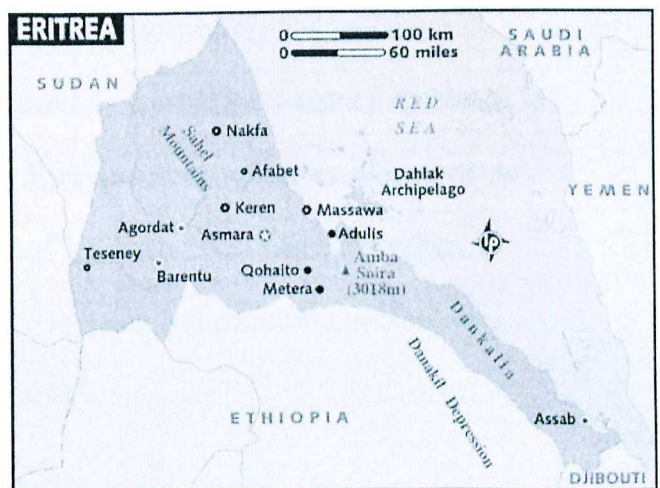
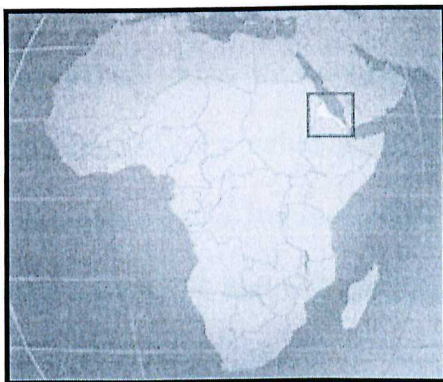
This project has been designed to look into the challenges of resettlement for Eritreans moving to live in Indianapolis. The discussion of this work follows the footsteps of research on refugee resettlement by asking and responding to some of the common questions surrounding resettlement: why choose to resettle; what is a refugee's initial response to entry into a host country; what is the resettlement process like; how does a refugee cope with their resettlement difficulties; and what are the prospects for future generations? This work will provide answers to these questions by analyzing the case of three resettled immigrants living in Indianapolis.

A Brief Overview of Eritrea:

Eritrea's authoritarian government operated by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice holds about 75 of the 150 seats on the National Assembly. Isaias Afewerki, the country's president, has held his position since the country seized its independence in 1993 from Ethiopia. Eritrea faces a media lock down, and the formation of political parties has been disallowed by the PFDJ.

The PFDJ has developed a *national service* program which all citizens of Eritrea are required to partake in. The service typically begins with youth still in their teenage years. The regime established camp Sawa, a central military camp and secondary education institution, for all young *national service* participants in 2005. *National service* participation can extend into a lifetime of service. Furthermore, with the construction of Sawa came the construction of new state-operated institutions of higher education and the destruction of old Eritrean universities.

Despite a quiet front on international media, the global community has reached out to Eritrea. Organizations such as Exodus Refugee, Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the United Nations have been working to resettle political refugees coming from Eritrea.¹ Photo Credit:²



¹Information regarding Eritrean history and government practices was provided by Mussie. See references

²Left: *Country Profile: Eritrea*. Right: *Political Map of Eritrea*. See references

Involved Indianapolis-based Organizations

Catholic Charities

“The staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities Indianapolis are called by the Gospel to uphold the dignity of all people. Guided by Catholic social teaching, we consider it a privilege to deliver compassionate and caring service to help and empower those in need.”

-About Us

Catholic Charities, founded in 1919, is an Indianapolis based not-for-profit charity which has dedicated itself to serving the *poor and hurting* of the Indianapolis community. Catholic Charities lends itself to aiding the refugee populations, including Eritreans, of Indianapolis.³

Exodus Refugee Immigration

“Exodus Refugee Immigration works with refugees — worldwide victims of persecution, injustice and war — to establish self-sufficient lives in freedom and sanctuary for themselves and their families in Indiana.”

-Mission Statement

Exodus Refugee Immigration was instituted in 1981 with the intentions of aiding Cuban refugees resettle in the United States. Now Exodus Refugee Immigration helps to resettle refugees in the U.S. from twenty different countries.

Exodus Refugee Immigration is the primary resettlement agency operating in Indianapolis to resettle incoming Eritreans. Exodus offers a plethora of services to incoming refugees including: an orientation of Indianapolis, lessons on using Indianapolis public transportation, lessons on locating and acquiring necessities, introductory ESL lessons, and financial support.⁴

³ Information on Catholic Charities was provided by Mussie and their website. See references

⁴ Information on Exodus Refugee Immigration was provided by Mussie and their website. See references

Literature Review:

Social research on refugees and resettlement has discovered several common aspects that tend to appear during the resettlement process of a refugee's life. These aspects include: (1) The option of resettlement often feels obliged rather than a choice for many refugees; (2) Resettlement problems of cultural difference between home cultures and host cultures such as issues of: inclusion, social inequality, and welfare and wellbeing; (3) Problems of intra-group conflict often exist in resettled communities; (4) Refugees often use their home culture as a means to cope with their issues of resettlement. The following work will present a sample of the research which acknowledges and details these aspects of resettlement life.

Andrew Kanter (1995) presented an account from Cambodia's refugee camp, Site 2, which suggested that many refugees moving from a country in political or armed conflict to live in host country as a refugee often feels like a forced obligation rather than an option in order to meet their basic needs. Kanter (1995) explained that although Site 2 was a "remarkable achievement" (p. 621), it also had many downfalls. Many families living in the camp could not have their basic needs for shelter, food, water, and security met (Kanter, 1995, p. 620). Shelters were made of thatched roofs and bamboo; they were in constant need of repair and almost never provided complete protection from wind and rain (Kanter, 1995, p. 620). The camp relied on aid organizations to bring in water (Kanter, 1995, p. 620). International community members were asked to leave the camp from dusk until dawn, leaving the inhabitants susceptible to robbery and rape at night (Kanter, 1995, p. 620). The harsh conditions which Kanter (1995) described at

Cambodia's Site 2 indicate that refugees living in a camp may not be able to meet their basic needs unless they resettle.

While Kanter's (1995) work focused on examining the logistical forces pushing refugees into resettlement, Carol Pavlish (2007) examined the psychological forces which push refugees from their homes to host countries by studying refugees in the DRC. Pavlish (2007) discovered that a significant number of Congolese refugee women had either lost hope or feared for the future of their family, specifically for their daughters (p. 30-31). She also found that many men in the Congolese camp feared for their own futures and said they had lost their "peace of heart" (Pavlish, 2007, p. 32). Pavlish (2007) found that both men and women missed their old lives, which they called "the good life" (p. 32), and that they wanted to rekindle that good life through resettlement. Pavlish's (2007) and Kanter's (1995) work display the psychological and logistical reasons which often cause resettlement to feel more like an obligation to meet basic physical and mental needs rather than a choice for refugees.

Other researchers have discovered that refugees often face various wellbeing issues including social inclusion in their host country as well as mental and physical wellbeing issues which originate from vast differences between the refugee's home culture and the culture of their host country. Correa-Velez, Gifford, and Barnett (2010) defined a refugee's inclusive-wellbeing through: the achievement of linguistic and cultural competence of their host country; opportunities to study and receive a high education; living near members of their ethnic group; settlement with or near family members; choice and security of housing; peace and security of the local host area; feelings of belonging within their own ethnic community; feelings of belonging within

the greater community of one's host country; and income and employment success (p. 1400).

Katrine Fangen's (2006) work with Somali refugees resettled in Norway supports the definition of Correa-Velez et al. (2010) regarding refugee inclusive-wellbeing with an examination of sentiments of humiliation caused by the cultural differences between Somali refugees and their hosts (Fangen, 2006, p. 69). Furthermore, she found that refugees living within a host country with a vastly different culture from their own can invoke feelings of vulnerability and intimidation in their daily lives and lead to sentiments of humiliation and exclusion from the host population (Fangen, 2006, p. 75). The humiliation of refugees caused by the vast cultural differences between a host country's population and its resettled population cause difficulties for resettled refugees to meet a minimum level of inclusive-wellbeing to feel secure in their new homes (Fangen, 2006; Correa-Velez et al., 2010). Issues of inclusivity can also exacerbate issues of social inequality between hosts and guest refugees (Valenta & Bunar, 2010).

Marko Valenta and Nihad Bunar (2010), during their comparative study of Swedish and Norwegian integration policy, explored the intricacies of the social inequality that refugees face during their transition from their home to host country (p. 463). Valenta and Bunar (2010) found that while Sweden and Norway provide their refugee populations with adequate and above average housing and employment assistance for initial resettlement, they do not offer sufficient welfare programs to help their refugees build socioeconomic momentum (p. 468-471). This lack of social and economic welfare programs combined with the cultural differences between the Scandinavians and their refugee-guests resulted in the refugee populations becoming

locked in their own social and economic spheres while a gap formed and widened between the social and economic spheres of the hosts and the refugees (Valenta & Bunar, 2010, p. 472).

While Valenta and Bunar's (2010) study featured host countries with resettlement programs that were able to adequately support refugees in the short-term, their study rose concerns about the long-term wellbeing of resettled refugees (p. 472). Long-term issues (while not specifically stated by Valenta and Bunar) have been organized into two focal areas: psychological wellbeing and physical wellbeing (Mann, 2010; McKeary & Newbold, 2010).

Gillian Mann (2010) studied the ways in which resettled refugees were affected by the long-term psychological issue of "loss of self-worth" (p. 261). Mann (2010) studied and worked with over one hundred young refugees, between seven and eighteen years old, to understand their sentiments towards their host country, using Congolese refugees living in Tanzania as a case study (p. 261). She found that many of her subjects suffered from "extreme poverty and social exclusion, harassment and discrimination" (Mann, 2010, p. 261-262). Material needs aside, many of Mann's subjects explained that they had to expend all of their daily energy in order to "survive" (2010, p. 262) their social ailments. Furthermore, Mann (2010) explained that while the children were attempting to survive challenges of nutrition, they were mostly combatting psychological issues such as maintaining a sense of "self-worth, dignity, and purpose" (p. 262). While Mann (2010) found that psychological issues such as negative notions of self-worth can be damaging to a refugee's long-term wellbeing (p. 268-269), Marcia Inhorn and Gamal

Serour (2011) and Marie McKeary and Bruce Newbold (2002) researched some issues between resettled refugees' physical health and their long-term wellbeing.

Marcia Inhorn and Gamal Serour (2011) examined Arab Muslim refugee populations living in the United States to "assess how Islamic attitudes toward medicine affect Muslims' engagement with the American healthcare system" (p. 935). Their study cited the following major issues between U.S. hosted Arab refugees and the American healthcare system: poverty, a lack of health insurance, language barriers, discrimination and distrust (notably during the recent future just after 9/11), a desire for Muslim physicians, and "religiously appropriate" medical care (Inhorn & Serour, 2011, p. 935-936). Inhorn and Serour (2011) concluded that the physical wellbeing of refugees (particularly Arab Muslims who have settled in the United States) in a host country can hinge on the cultural differences between the hosts and the guests and the ability of the host country to meet the needs, culturally included, of their guest refugees (p. 941).

Marie McKeary and Bruce Newbold (2002) conducted research similar to Inhorn and Serour's (2011); however, their research explored a broad sampling of various refugees, speaking sixty-five different languages, and their interactions with the Canadian healthcare system (McKeary & Newbold, 2002, p. 528). McKeary and Newbold (2002) discovered a number of obstacles for Canadian based refugees attempting to use Canada's healthcare system including: "interpretation and language, cultural competency, isolation, poverty, transportation, and healthcare coverage" (p. 529). McKeary and Newbold's (2002) conclusions were also similar to Inhorn and Serour's (2011): that cultural barriers between refugee populations and their host country can cause challenges for host countries to provide and guest refugees to receive healthcare (McKeary &

Newbold, 2002, p. 529-536). And in the long-term, these challenges can present problems for a refugee population's physical wellbeing (McKeary & Newbold, 2002, p. 540).

The above mentioned research has detailed how issues of long-term physical and mental wellbeing, social equality, and inclusion are often present in the lives of resettled refugees, and has explained how these are typically issues related to the interactions between populations of resettled refugees and their hosts. The next part of this review will detail the research on intra-group conflict as a source of problems for refugees during their resettlement in a host country.

Katrine Fangen (2006) explored how intra-group conflict can present refugees with problems during their resettlement process while studying Somali refugees living in Norway (p. 69-70). Fangen (2006) found that resettled refugees are prone to types of humiliation which originated in their home country (particularly humiliation generated and perpetuated by political turmoil or blunder), and may continue in their host country (p. 82-84). She concluded that refugee populations do not necessarily completely cooperate simply because of their places of origin (Fangen, 2006, p. 84-85).

Gail Hopkins (2006) formed a conclusion similar to Fangen's (2006) while working with Somali refugees living in London and Toronto. Hopkins (2006) argued that the clan dynamics of Somali refugees persisted into their resettlement in London and Toronto which resulted in intra-group conflict among her subject groups (p. 361). Furthermore, Hopkins (2006) argued that London and Toronto's failure to provide adequate support to their Somali refugee populations exacerbated the issues of internal-conflict among the Somalis (p. 376-377). Ultimately Fangen (2006) and Hopkins (2006)

would agree that preexisting intra-group conflicts between refugees indeed carry over into host countries, and that intra-group conflicts can undermine a refugee population's resettlement process of integration into their host country.

Celia McMichael (2002) researched the ways in which refugee populations cope with the challenges of resettlement by studying the resettlement of forty-two Somali women in Melbourne, Australia (p. 175). She found that resettlement could be quite disturbing to refugees as dislocation from their former lives set in (McMichael, 2002, p. 173-174). However, she also found that her subjects were able to use their faith in Islam to cling to the familiar during their resettlement (McMichael, 2002, p. 171). McMichael's (2002) study concluded that refugees often use their home culture in order to cope with the stresses of resettlement in a host country even though the differences between their culture and their host's culture often cause problems between the guest and host populations (p. 186-817).

Social and anthropological research on refugees experiencing resettlement has determined that cultural challenges of language and cultural competency, financial struggles, issues of physical and mental wellbeing, and issues of intra-group conflict exist. Furthermore, researchers have studied the methods refugees use to cope with their resettlement hardships. The next portion of this study will present a vignette into the lives of Eritrean refugees living in Indianapolis. It will examine the reasons why Eritreans choose resettlement, the Eritrean initial response to resettlement in Indianapolis, the issues and problems faced by Eritreans resettling in Indianapolis, the methods Indianapolis-based Eritrean refugees use to cope with their resettlement difficulties, and the prospects for future generations of Eritrean Americans growing up in Indianapolis.

Methods:

The qualitative data for this case study was collected during February and March of 2014 at Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana. The qualitative data for this project concerned the sentiments of Eritreans on several aspects of their resettlement process to Indianapolis. This data was collected vis-à-vis two semistructured interviews with Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees living in Indianapolis. Interview questions were designed to be open ended and broad in order to capture the subjects' narrative as well as their sentiments regarding their resettlement experiences in Indianapolis. The interviews were recorded and later transcribed in their entirety. This digital data was stored on a personal hard drive.

Three participants were involved in the data collection portion of this project: Mussie, an Eritrean man who has been living in Indianapolis for approximately seven years; Hodan, an Eritrean woman who has been living in Indianapolis for approximately seven years; and Eman, an Ethiopian woman with familial relations in Eritrea who has been living in Indianapolis for approximately one month. These participants were found using a snowball method, beginning with the male Eritrean who works with Eritrean "newcomers" as an AmeriCorps volunteer.

The qualitative data collected in this case study was analyzed using a grounded theory method where conclusions were drawn directly from data provided by research subject participants. Further conclusions were drawn between the analyzed data collected during this project and existing research on refugee resettlement.⁵

⁵ Aspects of this project's design were inspired by Denscombe's research guide. See references

Discussion:

The resettlement of Eritrean refugees to Indianapolis, Indiana seems to have largely been ignored by academic study. This project aims to tend to this neglect, and has been designed to look into the challenges of resettlement, and to respond to the questions of: why choose to resettle; what is a refugee's initial response to entry into a host country; what is the resettlement process like; how does a refugee cope with their resettlement difficulties; and what are the prospects for future generations? This work will provide answers to these questions in the context of Indianapolis by analyzing the cases of three resettled immigrants living in Indianapolis.

Obligation over Choice

The members of the Eritrean population of Indianapolis which were interviewed for this study chose resettlement out of a financial necessity or as a means to escape the political turmoil of Eritrea. Furthermore, the subjects of this project expressed sentiments of obligation rather than choice towards their resettlement. Eman told her story of familial strife and its complimentary financial pressures which drove her to resettlement:

My mom died when I was little; when I was like five. She died by cancer. I grew up without knowing my father. He started to come into my life when I started to really get to know myself, so like now. It was hard to live alone in that kind of situation. I stopped school because I had to help my family. My grandma got sick, and I stopped school, and I started helping her. I like learning a lot, but actually I didn't get to finish [school] because of the situation I had back home. And now, hopefully I wish to get the chance to learn here and help my family. Back there I have a sick grandma, and she's really old. She has diabetes. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Eman, added her thoughts on the typical economic status of people living in Eritrea. She said: "You have to do something or you have to have something. Otherwise you're

gonna have to go on the streets, even if you're old or if you're young. You know there are days where you don't eat or sleep" (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman spoke as if she felt obliged to resettle as a means to meet her desires to gain an education, to financially support herself, and to financially support her family with remittance.

Another participant, Mussie, spoke much more about resettlement as a means to escape the authoritarian Eritrean government than as a means to meet his financial needs.

Mussie also explicitly mentioned that he felt obliged to leave when he said:

I would say for Somalis and Eritreans, the only option you have is to leave the country. Specifically for Eritreans, you have to be a soldier for a "limited" period of time. They call it a national service, but it's actually a slavery service. [Mussie later explained that the national service typically gets extended to become what he called an "unlimited" period of time.] You get nothing, no compensation. And so you gotta get out when you can. Some people are forced. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

When Mussie said, "Some people are forced" (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014), he did not mean that the Eritrean government was forcing its citizens to leave the country. Rather, he meant that if an Eritrean citizen would like to choose a life outside of Eritrea's "National Service," they must flee the country to seek such a life.

Eman and Mussie had their respective reasons for opting for resettlement, financial and political; however, they both felt an obligation to choose resettlement over living in their home country. At the time they made their choices to move, neither of them knew that they would find themselves living in Indianapolis. While they both shared in the uncertainty of not knowing where they would start their new lives, they also shared similar moving experiences as well as feelings of fear about it.

Initial Transition to Indianapolis

When I interviewed Eman, she had only been living in Indianapolis, and the United States more broadly, for about a month. Her memory of her transition was fresh in her mind, and she spoke a lot about her interactions with Americans and American culture. While language was not an immense barrier for Eman because she had been studying English since her childhood, she found American culture to be quite different from her own none-the-less (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman discussed her feelings of fear which came from her lack of knowledge about American culture and the environmental changes which she underwent during her transition:

I was scared; I was really scared. I was uncomfortable. I was, I dunno if it was the weather or something, but it was really different. You know there are seasons where I come from, so it's like this, I mean not with the snow, but it's like this. There is a rainy season you know. There are so many people here of different colors and different languages, and it's really different. I felt uncomfortable. I mean when I met her [Hodan, her resettlement caseworker], I felt comfortable. She gave me hope you know, that I can do it. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Eman's transition has not been without a number of difficulties, as she has not yet found work or been able to enter into the higher education system. However, it has been eased by her competence in the English language.

Mussie had a similar positive experience with English as Eman. He originally fled Eritrea to live in South Africa where he studied English and economics at the University of Pretoria. He mentioned that he felt comfortable in Indianapolis with his English skills from South Africa (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). However, he explained the issues with English that many Indianapolis-based Eritreans encounter during their initial resettlement period when he said:

For the newcomers, immigrants, refugees, [the resettlement process] is hard for many reasons, but the language is the main one. It's very stressful for a newcomer to be at work and not know how to express themselves. You know, sometimes something happens, and if you can't explain it, it can be very bad. But it's the type of work, actually, that can be stressful too. But some people, they might be professionals back home, but here, because they cannot speak English they can't do what they want. And that's also very stressful. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

As Mussie explained, many Eritreans have come to live in Indianapolis with an education as well as professional experience; however, their lack of English skills has disallowed them to work in their professional field (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Mussie's discussion of Indianapolis-based Eritreans and their English competence indicates that language barriers can be detrimental to an immigrant's success; however, Eman's story suggests that English is not the only factor affecting a refugee's resettlement experience.

From Hopeful to Disheartened

Speaking with Mussie, Eman, and Hodan has revealed that resettlement for Eritreans in Indianapolis, after the initial culture shock, typically begins hopeful, but becomes more and more difficult after about six months of residency (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Much of what keeps the newcomers hopeful seems to be attributed to three things: the orientation services of resettlement agency caseworkers, the financial services of the resettlement agencies, and the general public of Indianapolis.

Hodan, an Eritrean refugee who has been working in Indianapolis as a refugee caseworker for about seven years, has helped numerous newcomers, including Eman, acclimate to Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Here she explained

how she is able to help newcomers ease their minds and keep them hopeful during the early portions of their resettlement transition:

I'm an immigrant, and I've been through all this stuff. I know what they need, and what they go through. So from there I can help them. So she [Eaman] felt uncomfortable coming here. And I told her, "Don't feel stressed. Everything is safe here." And I tried to help her feel like she was at home. Us caseworkers, we are the ones that work the closest with the newcomers. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Hodan and her colleagues are able to speak Tigrigna and Amharic, the two main languages in Eritrea, not only in order to communicate, but to introduce a sense of familiarity to the newcomers (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). While the caseworkers are able to help their clients feel at home through communicating in traditional manners, they also help to educate the newcomers on a plethora of topics: the layout of Indianapolis, where to acquire necessities, how to use public transportation, how to set up bank accounts and use other services like pharmacies (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Caseworkers like Hodan, who work for Indianapolis area resettlement agencies, are able to help ease the minds of their clients during their transition while helping them become familiar with their new environment. However, caseworkers are not the only service the resettlement agencies provide to keep newcomers in good spirits. Mussie explained several of the beneficial functions of the resettlement agencies which help Eritrean newcomers with their transition to Indianapolis:

You get an orientation. So they teach you these things, and you get help from everywhere. Your living expenses are covered. You don't pay for your electricity; you don't pay for your rent. You don't pay for stuff because you get help from the resettlement agency or from the government. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Resettlement agencies are able to educate as well as alleviate the initial financial stresses of the Eritrean newcomers.

Eman expressed great appreciation to Hodan and the resettlement agencies managing her resettlement, but she mentioned that there were other elements keeping her in good spirits during her first month in Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman felt that the Indianapolis public was respectful of her Eritrean heritage, and that Indianapolis felt like a community she enjoyed being a part of (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). She explained her sentiments towards Indianapolis Hoosiers:

I was scared [of people staring at me]. But it hasn't happened to me here. Everyone is like, what I like about here... In Africa there is a respect for everyone. But here it's like *everyone* respects you. They, even when you go to the cafeteria and you wanna buy something, have a big smile. In Africa, it's like, "what do you want?" I like this. It's like modern thinking you know. And there is modern thinking here. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Hodan echoed the positive reinforcement Eritreans receive from the hospitality of the Indianapolis public (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). She also explained that the Indianapolis Islamic population is inclusive towards the Eritrean Muslim refugee population: "Generally, we have like six mosques here in Indianapolis. My community typically goes to the one in Plainfield. We'll go for prayer and we talk on Fridays" (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Both Eman and Hodan explained that the Indianapolis community has been welcoming to them, and that it has eased their resettlement transitions.

Hodan went further to explain that American refugee policy is also quite accommodating:

And another thing we can talk about is the way other countries treat their immigrants and their refugees. For examples Syria, Israel, Lebanon: the way they treat their immigrants is not the same way they treat their people. But here, when you move into the United States, the immigrants and the refugees are treated like everyone else. You get the same rights and the same benefits. And that's a very good thing that I like living here in the United States. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

This study does not include primary source evidence to validate Hodan's claim that Eritrean immigrants and refugees receive the same rights and benefits as American citizens. However, it is likely that the Indianapolis populace is likely more respectful towards Eritrean immigrants than the general public of Syria, Israel, and Lebanon. The hospitality and inclusivity of the greater Indianapolis population as well as the relatively accommodating policies of the United States have helped Eritrean refugees acclimate to the Indianapolis area.

Despite the services of the resettlement agencies, efforts of the caseworkers, and hospitality of the Indianapolis public and American refugee policy, the transition for Eritrean refugees to Indianapolis typically becomes difficult. Mussie explained how many Indianapolis based Eritreans begin to feel disheartened when they start to live on their own and away from the aid of their resettlement agency:

Honestly, the problems with the newcomers start when they've been here for a while, when they've been living by themselves. That's really a stressful time. It's not easy to get into the system, and to really try to survive. It's really difficult. That's where people get stressed and depressed too much. It's not easy to just really get something that can help you survive, especially for those that have just come from Africa and they are trying to help their family members back home. And then all this stuff starts to come to your mind, and you get really stressed. And you make so many plans you know. And you know the system is different. The culture is different. The language is different. The people are different. And that really makes things pretty complicated. So when you start to live by yourself, that's when life starts getting bad. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

With further discussion, Mussie explained that as Eritreans establish themselves in Indianapolis, they slowly become financially independent from their resettlement agency (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). As this happens, the Eritreans remind themselves that they are also attempting to support their family living abroad and that their credentials and English are typically not adequate to support themselves let alone their family as well (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

The Problem of High Expectations

The problems Eritreans face in Indianapolis seem to typically begin with a set of high expectations that the refugees bring with them from their home to Indianapolis. These expectations typically include being able to earn much more money living in the United States than in Eritrea while working an entry level job (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Furthermore, many Indianapolis-based Eritreans and their families living abroad expect large sums of this money to be sent back to Eritrea as remittance for family members (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Mussie explained the origins of these expectations:

But another big problem for the newcomers is that they just expect too much. But it depends on your exposure actually. If you were exposed to other things than where you grew up, then your expectations might be fine. But if you never saw anything outside of where you grew up, if you grew up in a refugee camp, if you'd never been anywhere, then you come with these big expectations. So when they come here, like you know, they get minimum wage. And it's very stressful and depressing. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Many Eritreans grow up in Eritrea with notions of a prosperous and wealthy America where they could someday become very financially successful (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman echoed these notions when she said, "We dream about coming

here” (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Moreover, she explained that the families of Indianapolis-based Eritreans expect money to be sent to them in Eritrea:

Yeah, and family and friends can expect so many things from you. All of them. If you work hard here, you can make it. But back home, if you say that you’re going to America, that means [to family and friends] that you’re going to bring dollars from the floor! Even if you don’t succeed here, they won’t believe you. Even if you say that you don’t have anything, they will still expect things from you. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

These expectations of being able to earn large amounts of money as well as send money home typically result in grief for Indianapolis-based Eritreans for simple reasons of inaccessibility.

It is difficult for many Eritreans living in Indianapolis to earn money outside of the state minimum wage for several reasons including time, language issues, and recognition of credentials (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman and Mussie discussed the issue of simply not having enough hours in their days to work at minimum wage to support themselves and gain an education at the same time – hoping that with an education they will be able to earn more than minimum wage (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman explained:

I was planning. And they [Mussie and Hodan] were making jokes. I was planning so many things. I was gonna work two jobs and go to school. And then I learned that it was impossible. They told me that it was impossible, but I still wanna try it. But the thing is, I’m gonna try the school and the work at the same time, but not two jobs. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Mussie replied:

If you’re busy for sixteen hours working, and doing two jobs, and you got only twenty-four hours per day... so you gotta have time to drive to your job, sleep, shower, food... so how many hours are you really gonna have? You cannot really sustain that way for very long. But it’s really hard to

accomplish what you wanna accomplish, what you expected to accomplish. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Mussie explained that working a full-time minimum wage job as well as studying at a community college (commonly Ivy Tech but sometimes IUPUI) is what occupies the first seven years of an Eritrean refugee's life in Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). He concluded that it is typically very stressful for many to sustain this lifestyle, that it does not often meet the expectation of the newcomers, and that it typically leads to periods of depression during their transition (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

While many Indianapolis-based Eritreans expect to be able to send remittance to their families back home, the difficulty of doing so often results in a shortcoming of their expectations (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Mussie explained the challenges of sending money to Eritrea:

It's not allowed. You just gotta do it in an illegal way. There are people that just transfer the money from here to there, and they ask their family member or someone that's in the country, but it's not allowed. The regime has got its own banking system. And they want you to send the money through that. But it's totally incomparable to the real exchange rate. So if it's thirteen or sixteen, they make it twenty nakfa [Eritrean currency] per dollar. But in the open market it's about fifty something. They double it, so they can make use of people. There's always a way to get your money there, but it's not legal. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

If an Indianapolis-based Eritrean is able to earn enough money to send a portion of it home as remittance, it is taxed by the Eritrean government in the form of a low exchange rate (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). This creates a situation in which Eritrean refugees feel inadequate and unable to not only meet their expectations but their family's expectations as well (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). These instances where Indianapolis-based Eritreans fail to meet their high expectations: having to work a low income job in the United States, not

having the time to improve their job, not being able to adequately support their family abroad, or a combination of these issues typically leads to grief for the refugees during their first years in Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Other Transitional Difficulties

Aside from the high expectations that Eritreans typically bring to Indianapolis, there are a number of education, profession, and logistics related issues that render their first years of resettlement frustrating and difficult. As previously discussed, many resettled Eritreans came to Indianapolis with previous education, but their education is often not recognized by Indianapolis institutions (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Hodan told her personal case:

For example, in Africa, I had a master's degree. When I came here, I had to start from zero. Exactly. I stressed a lot. I studied a lot. I had a master's degree; I was a nurse, and now I have to take ESL classes? (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Hodan's African nursing certifications were not recognized in Indianapolis, and she had to recomplete and pay for a second education at IUPUI (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Hodan expressed that it was extremely frustrating for her to have to reacquire her credentials (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Mussie explained that sometimes African credentials can be accredited by certain accrediting institutions and by satisfactorily passing required exams in Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). However, he explained how many Eritreans coming to live in Indianapolis are neither aware of these institutions nor understand how they work:

Yeah, it's just so hard because you don't know who's making the rules, and you don't know the requirements, and you don't know the system. Like, I know ph.ds who work in warehouses. And when you're talking to them over tea or coffee, they are so stressed over this. But I don't think there is a way to get a solution for this... because it just seems like a bigger problem. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Mussie then continued to explain how Eritreans with professional backgrounds get frustrated because they are not able to utilize their education or experience in Indianapolis to find work (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). He agreed that for educated and/or trained Eritreans, coming to Indianapolis felt like “walking into a room with no lights on” in terms of finding work (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Simultaneously, he explained how untrained Eritreans living in Indianapolis do not undergo this stress because they are typically happy to take any entry level and unskilled labor position:

Especially if you've come with some kind of education, like me. For instance, some people that don't come with anything, I'd almost say it would be easier for them. They can assimilate everywhere, easier than those that are professionals. They can take any kind of job. They aren't missing anything, they aren't losing anything. But for people like me, I've been in school for twenty years. I started first grade and then I went all the way until I had my master's degree. So when you come here like this, you are in the middle of nowhere you know. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

In terms of credentials, Mussie explained that it is often less frustrating for uneducated and untrained Eritreans to resettle in Indianapolis than for educated professionals (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Untrained and uneducated Eritreans entering into the Indianapolis labor force do not need to undergo the stresses of having their credentials rejected by Indianapolis Institutions, while the educated and trained undergo high amounts of stress to get their credentials recognized (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

However, Mussie explained that “ignorance did not always mean bliss” (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014), at least for Eritrean men coming to live in Indianapolis. He explained how the Eritrean culture of gender-based work norms makes it difficult for Eritrean men to find and cope with working in Indianapolis:

Generally [in Indianapolis]... I would say for people from Eritrea... It can be easier for women to survive, easier than men. I'm gonna explain. Most of the things that you get here as an entry level job, our women used to do the same kind of stuff back home. It could be in a family environment. They used to clean the clothes of the family. I mean, I'm not stereotyping; they just had the experience of cleaning. So the first kind of job that you get when you first come here is this kind of job. So the women have already done this while they were back home, so it's not really a big deal to do the same thing here. But for men, it's a brand new experience... That's the main factor for women getting used to working here faster than men. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Many jobs Mussie was referring to are the types of jobs often suggested by Indianapolis resettlement agencies (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). These jobs usually include hotel housekeeping and dishwashing (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Because it is frustrating for Eritrean men to do this kind of work, they tend to look elsewhere for jobs but are often unable to find other work (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

While Eritrean newcomers search for work befitting their interests and training, they often get discouraged by the difficulties of making professional networks (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie spoke about the difficulty of finding a job outside the entry level and often low-paying ones suggested by the resettlement agencies:

You need networks here; you need connections. Even for instance, you don't know where to look for a job when you've just come here. But once you've stayed here, you find ways, and you find people, and they refer you to people. And those things get a lot easier as you stay here. But it's really hard to get your first job. You dunno where you can go to apply, and you dunno who you can go talk to. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Hodan further explained the difficulties of fitting into the Indianapolis professional arena in talking about the simple logistics of communication and transportation:

If they live next to their community, that will be helpful. But if they are living away from the community, and they don't have a car, they don't have cell phones, and they don't speak English, then it's gonna be very hard for them. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014)

Hodan and Mussie would both agree that it simply takes a great amount of time (Hodan often suggested seven years) for Eritrean newcomers to fully adjust and transition into a stable life in Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). They would agree that a stable life in Indianapolis for Eritrean newcomers would include friends, English competence, established professional credentials, a professional network, a reliable means of transportation, and access to modern means of communications such as cell phones and internet access (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Coping

During the duration of this suggested seven years, Indianapolis-based Eritreans often seek out what is familiar to them (in terms of culture and work) in order to cope with the stress brought on by their transitional difficulties (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Mussie explained the importance of the two Eritrean Orthodox churches in Indianapolis in terms of Eritreans seeking out familiar cultural aspects to confide in:

For the Christian [Eritreans], their base community for them is the church. I know they got the churches here; the Eritreans got two churches here. So that's the place where you can have your community stuff. So everybody comes to the church when there is an event, or for Sunday. So I would say that's the base community for Eritreans. Even if I didn't know anything else, those are the places where you could go for social gatherings and social issues. (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Mussie later explained that the Eritrean Orthodox churches operate in Tigrinya, the traditional language of Eritrea (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). He also noted that the community support, familiar language, and familiar culture helps many Indianapolis Eritreans feel at ease amongst their issues of transition (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

While the Christian half of the Eritrean population in Indianapolis is able to find a haven from their problems at one of two Indianapolis Eritrean Orthodox churches, the Muslim half of the Indianapolis-based Eritrean population does not have a similar convenience (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Hodan indicated that the Indianapolis area has six mosques, but none of them are exclusively culturally Eritrean (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). She indicated that many Muslim Indianapolis-based Eritreans attend services at the mosque in Plainfield; however, these services are conducted in Arabic and English (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Neither of these languages are necessarily understood by the Eritreans which attend the services (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Furthermore, the Plainfield mosque tends to cater its community activities towards Muslims of Middle Eastern heritage rather than African heritage (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). This absence of common cultural space for the Muslim Eritrean population of Indianapolis makes it difficult for them to seek refuge in their cultural heritage for support during their difficult times of resettlement (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

A common space, or community center, for Eritreans in Indianapolis would be a plausible and effective solution to meet the need of creating a wholesome and all welcoming Eritrean environment in Indianapolis (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie

expressed his desires for, the uses of, and the complications with building an Eritrean community center in Indianapolis:

In other countries in Europe and in big cities they have Eritrean community centers that are separate from the churches. [The closest thing Indianapolis-based Eritreans have to a community center is their Orthodox churches.] And these community centers are built to provide for the community. I wish we had one in Indianapolis. If we had like one house with some kind of compound, you know. You just put on activities like we do back home. We'll have soccer or whatever, and people might come to the community house, and you get together. And then you teach your kids about the language and the stuff, and you keep your culture you know. All you need is one house, anywhere, you know. I've thought about trying to set it up, but it's not easy to find the right connections you know...

We want the kids to speak the language as much as possible. But it's not only the kids that need the center, you've got teenagers. And you know, getting together is more than language. Even adults need things. Okay, so we may just set up like games we play back home. We play Bilardo, you know. It's a kind of pool, but you don't play with a stick. We play with our hands. And many people could come and enjoy, and at the same time you keep your togetherness and their culture. And everyone would come, and you talk, and you solve problems. You just gotta get people to show up. It's hard to get people to show up. So these kinds of centers would help us to get people to show up. People hate meetings you know. But if you wanna relax, we could make tea, and so you know, they just come. They visit the center, and they would frequent that place. I think it would help a lot, you know. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Mussie has suggested a community center in which Indianapolis-based Eritreans can convene to confide in one another, support one another, appreciate and teach their culture, spend leisure time, and hold meetings to address Eritrean social issues (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Furthermore, Mussie suggested that 38th Street, Moller, or Lafayette would be the most accessible areas for such a community center for the Indianapolis Eritrean population because many either live near there or would be able to use public transportation to get there (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

This community center and its capacity to hold community meetings could take the Indianapolis-based Eritrean community a long way in solving its internal political issues, and thereby create a more singular and inclusive Eritrean community in Indianapolis than the one that currently exists. Mussie explained the difficulties of building a strong Eritrean community in Indianapolis amongst the existing political issues between the Eritreans:

You just want to build a strong community as much as you can. But things are not really as easy as such. You know, especially for foreigners here, you have some many things to do, and you are very busy. So it's not really easy even if you wish to have a community. Especially for the Eritrean group here, there are government supporters and opposition. I'm just talking about the Eritrean one. So it's not really easy to bring these communities together. Whenever you try to build a community, this kind of difference survives. You're not really able to be together. Everybody wants to get what they want. So when you try to bring everyone together to look at the big picture, community wise, you know, they politicize it. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

It is noteworthy that these political issues derive from the political climate of Eritrea and have been transported to Indianapolis (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). These political divisions do not stem from religion (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie and Hodan agree that Muslim and Christian Eritreans do not necessarily politically agree or disagree (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Mussie and Hodan also agree that a community center would be an important venue for settling political disputes and forming an inclusive Eritrean community in Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

In summary, many Eritrean refugees living in Indianapolis cope with their resettlement struggles by seeking out fellow Eritreans in order to share in a common cultural experience (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). For the Christian Eritreans living in Indianapolis this is easily done as there are two exclusively Eritrean Orthodox churches

which cater to the Eritrean culture and the needs of newcomers (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). The Muslim Eritrean population in Indianapolis does not have this convenience because the Indianapolis area mosques are typically culturally inclined towards Middle Eastern Muslims rather than African Muslims (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Leaders in the Indianapolis Eritrean community have considered the importance of building a community center in order to furnish a common space between all Indianapolis-based Eritreans, and to be used as a venue to unify their internal political divisions (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Furthermore, Eritrean community leaders have indicated the most appropriate locations for a possible community center, but that there has simply not been enough funding to finance its construction any time soon (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

The Second-Generation

Hodan and Mussie agree that first-generation Eritreans coming to live in Indianapolis face many challenges concerning English language, American cultural competence, and the plethora of issues related to transferring and/or accrediting their African education, or to earning an American education (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). However, Mussie strongly suggested that the second-generation of Eritreans living in Indianapolis will succeed much better in these areas than their elder generation (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie compared the advantages of the second-generation of Eritreans with the disadvantages of the first-generation:

First, we can start with the language. Those people that just come that are my age, they don't speak English for instance. That's a big problem if you don't speak English here. You can't get any nice job, or even any job because they need someone that speaks at least a little bit of English. Second of all, there is the education. The kids that study here, you know, they are very competitive. So if you don't have an American education,

you're gonna be behind. So if you bring your papers from somewhere else, they aren't gonna be as good as what's here. Certification is the biggest problem you know. And even if you get certified, and you get your certified papers, and you got your master's degree this may not be suitable to the standards here. So for the kids, they of course don't have this problem. And the culture itself. Culture is broad. But they spend their time at school, and they learn American culture, and there is no culture shock. But for us, many things are different from back home. That can be an obstacle. But for the kids they can go anywhere, and they can be American, and that's that. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Mussie suggested that the major problems of being a first-generation Eritrean in Indianapolis are essentially nullified by growing up in Indianapolis as a second-generation Eritrean (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

Mussie spoke of his three children, and mentioned another large advantage that they have over the first-generation Eritreans of Indianapolis: they simply do not have to deal with the major stressors of the resettlement process (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie said:

Yeah, he [Mussie's eldest child] was born in Eritrea. He's now in eighth grade. The other was born in Ethiopia, and he's in second grade. And the other was born here, and she's a year old. You know for the kids, it's no problem at all. No problem at all. They pick up things quick. They go to school, and they don't have any bills to pay. They don't have to worry, and it's all taken care of. But this is a good part about being in America, you struggle a lot if you're the first-generation, but for the kids, it's all the same. So that's good for them. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Mussie seems to be happy to know that his children will grow up in a stable environment where they will be able to choose their future, and not have to cope with the same kinds of stresses that he had to during his resettlement in Indianapolis (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

While Mussie is happy with the environment his children are growing up in, he is not so content with the fact that his children will not share the same richness of Eritrean

culture as he has (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie spoke about the maturing process of second-generation Eritreans in Indianapolis:

[Second-generation Eritrean children] know about Eritrea because of [their parents]. And for sure, if Eritrea was a democratic country, they would know more than this because we'd take them there every summer so they could know what's going on. But now they will only get a little bit because of us and those we're around. But I'd say most of the time they just get Americanized. If they're going to school here, and they finish their school here... I've seen specific examples where they're very Americanized. And sometimes they want to act Eritrean-ized when they are in the Eritrean communities, but mostly they are Americanized. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Mussie suggested that the second-generation of Indianapolis-based Eritreans is arguably more Americanized than the second-generation of immigrants from a democratic country (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). This indicates that if Eritrea were democratic then the first-generation of Eritreans would be more comfortable visiting their home country with their children than they are now as it is governed by an authoritarian regime. Furthermore, this indicates that the cultural gap between the first and second-generations of Indianapolis-based Eritreans is possibly larger than the culture gap between the first and second-generations of other Indianapolis-based immigrants and refugees (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

Mussie lamented just how wide this cultural gap could be between his children and himself in regards to Tigrinya, his maternal language:

You know, it depends actually. If you come here very early in your age, they don't speak. They can listen, but they speak very little. If you come here after you've grown up a bit, an average age above eight, you still can keep your Tigrinya. They will still talk and listen. But if you come before eight, usually, they may listen but they aren't gonna be good in speaking. And if you're born here, it's harder. They can listen, but it's really hard for them to speak. But there are special cases and special families where their kids can speak Tigrinya fluently, you see what I'm saying? It depends, but usually if you're born here it's hard to learn the language. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Mussie has explained that his eldest child speaks Tigrinya fairly well, his middle child can understand but hardly speak, and the youngest is too young to have developed language yet (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

Mussie's response to the cultural gap between himself and his children carried a sense of melancholy but also a sense of relief (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). When he was questioned about his sentiments towards his children and the second-generation of Eritreans living in Indianapolis, he said:

This is a hard question actually. Very hard. I wish they could speak even a little of their parents' language. But if they cannot speak it, you know, you just take it as it is. When they get into a situation where they can only speak Tigrinya, you know, with the older family members, that's a problem. But you don't have any other options other than interpreting as much as you can. But while they have the language at home, I wish that they'd know it. That's the first thing. But if you can't make them speak it, you don't have no option. It doesn't make you feel good, but you can't do anything about it. It's just out of your control, you know. (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014)

Mussie presumably believes that it is worth it to himself and his family to be able to live in Indianapolis and suffer a cultural shift rather than live under the authority of the Eritrean government (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

Conclusions:

Many findings presented in this work on the resettlement experience of Eritreans moving to Indianapolis are congruent with what social and anthropological research has explained about refugee resettlement. These aspects include: (1) Feeling that resettlement often feels obliged rather than chosen; (2) Refugees struggle to overcome problems of social inequality and financial welfare; (3) Existence of intra-group conflict between members of a refugee population; (4) Refugees use their home culture as a coping device to remedy the challenges of resettlement.

Eman and Mussie's reasons for resettlement were similar to the ones Andrew Kanter (1995) and Carol Pavlish (2007) discussed in their research on Cambodian and Congolese refugees (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman decided to resettle because she believed resettlement would alleviate the financial strains put on her by her grandmother's medical needs (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Resettlement has literally meant life or death for Eman's grandmother, and as such has felt more like an obligation rather than an option. Eman's need to resettle in order to meet the basic requirements for life (healthcare for her grandmother) is similar to Kanter's (1995) presentation of Cambodians feeling that they must resettle in order to meet their basic needs for shelter, nourishment, and safety (p. 620-621).

While living in Eritrea, Mussie considered himself a slave to his country's authoritarian regime (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). He felt that he was obliged to resettle because he felt that escaping Eritrea's government was his only avenue to freedom and a successful life (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie's sense of obligation towards resettlement for a better life is similar to Pavlish's (2007) example of Congolese refugees feeling that

they would rekindle the “good life” of their past if they were to resettle (p. 32). Eman and Mussie both presented their choice of resettlement with a sense of urgency and reasoning that suggested that resettlement was an obligation in order to survive and live a good life, not an option (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Eman, Mussie, and Hodan explained their struggles to overcome problems of social inequality and financial welfare while living in Indianapolis which were similar to struggles found in resettlement research (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Mussie, and Hodan explained that it is difficult for Eritrean professionals to find work in their field in Indianapolis because their credentials are typically not recognized there (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman explained how untrained Eritreans resettling in Indianapolis have issues receiving a higher education because they cannot finance it along with meeting their basic needs on an Indiana minimum wage (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman, Mussie, and Hodan’s financial and welfare related challenges often led to social and economic problems as explained by Correa-Velez and Barnett (2010) in their work on resettling refugees and their wellbeing.

Mussie explained the difficulties in creating a unified Eritrean community in Indianapolis because of the population’s preexisting intra-group conflicts (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). He explained that Indianapolis-based Eritreans are significantly politically divided due to persistent political stances from Eritrea (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Mussie’s insights on the political nature of Indianapolis-based Eritreans coincide with Fangen (2006) and Hopkin’s (2006) research on resettled Somali refugees. Mussie (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014), Fangen (2006), and Hopkins (2006) would agree that preexisting political

divides in refugee groups cause intra-group conflicts and pose challenges to community building.

Eman, Mussie, and Hodan explained that they tend to use their Eritrean culture as a means to cope with the challenges of resettlement (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Their reflections on spending time with family, attending services at Eritrean churches, and speaking their native language were all important to maintaining their mental wellbeing (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). These reflections are similar to McMichael's (2002) findings on Somali women confiding in their home religion of Islam in order to cope with their resettlement in Melbourne, Australia.

Conclusions Unique to Indianapolis-Based Eritreans

Other resettlement-related findings presented in this work which are unique to the experiences of Indianapolis-based Eritreans are: (1) An inclusive cosmopolitan environment; (2) The necessity for a community center; (3) The prospects for Eritrean youth being raised in Indianapolis.

Indianapolis seems to be a welcoming environment for incoming immigrants (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Eman explained that she has felt respected by the general population of Indianapolis during her first month living there (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). She also felt that Indianapolis exhibits "modern thinking" (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014). Furthermore, Hodan explained that the overarching refugee policies of the United States are far more hospitable than other countries, and that these policies are carried out in Indianapolis (Eman, Mussie, & Hodan, Feb, 13, 2014).

Despite the welcoming atmosphere for Eritreans in Indianapolis, Mussie explained that a community center was a necessity for the Indianapolis Eritrean population (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). He suggested desirable locations due to their proximity to the majority of the Indianapolis-based Eritrean population (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Furthermore, he suggested that such a community center would be important for guarding the Eritrean culture within Indianapolis as well as a venue for discussing and solving political issues (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

Mussie suggested that regardless of the vulnerability of Eritrean culture in Indianapolis, the second-generation of Eritreans would be successful (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Despite the fact that many Eritrean youth growing up in Indianapolis may not speak Tigrigna fluently, he was content in knowing that they will not suffer the same cultural, social, and economic strains that he and his generation experienced (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014). Furthermore, Mussie explained that it is beneficial to the second-generation of Eritreans to become educated in Indianapolis because their credentials will be competitive no matter where they choose to live (Mussie, Mar, 6, 2014).

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